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[Entered at the Minneapolis Post-office, as Second-class Matter.]

VOLUME 2.

March, 1895.

NUMBER 1.

MONTHLY FIFTY CENTS PER YEAR.

PRICE, 5 CENTS.

SCHOOL

EDUCATION

HELPS



STORIES OF

The Yakima Valley
INDIANS.

BY

BERNICE E. NEWELL.

256
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PUBLISHED BY

SCHOOL EDUCATION COMPANY,

MINNEAPOLIS, MINN.



THE BELLE OF THE YAKIMAS AND HER HUSBAND.

JOHNNIE CAPTAIN.

Little Captain Johnnie, or Johnnie Captain, as he is called, is a small Indian boy eight years old, who lives in the great Yakima Indian Reservation in the State of Washington. He is quite a famous little captain, too, and no other boy can ride the little cayceuses as Johnnie can, so he is always to be seen at the races when the Indians come together in crowds, and the airs he puts on are very amusing.

When he was six years old a lady and gentleman took him on a long journey, first across the Rocky Mountains to St. Paul and Minneapolis on the Northern Pacific railroad, and then by the Great Lakes down to Cleveland, Ohio, and after that away down to the Atlantic coast. Johnnie rode horses in the East at some of the great races, and when he came

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home to the teepee where his father and mother live the rest of the boys thought him a very great person indeed, and he had things pretty much his own way, since no one of these ignorant Indian boys dared to dispute the captain.

It is a great sight when Johnnie starts on a horseback race. He wears no cap and his black hair is rather long and streams out behind; his brown legs are bare and he wraps them closely around the little pony; his jacket is a very gorgeous affair, gaily decorated with beads and feathers. Off he goes, like the wind, down the long, dusty track, for the summers of Yakima county have no rain, and the dust settles in clouds over the people who stand watching. The track is not a round one such as you have seen at fairs, but simply a long road with a loop at the end, so long that the riders go almost out of sight, and look like specks in the distance. When they turn to come back the excitement begins. The Indians have, all been betting, putting up blankets, horses, beadwork, furs, anything, on one side or the other, and they range themselves in groups on either side of the track to show which horse they have favored. There they stand,

A YAKIMA SUN DANCE.

most of them on horseback, watching the riders, and when the wiry cayceuses come galloping in, they pay their debts, pack up their goods and go home without a murmur.

I saw one man, very old and feeble, who had lost his only blanket and had had almost nothing to eat for days, yet he hobbled off without a word. It seemed very sad, but it is the way the Indians have trained themselves to bear pain and hunger.

Captain Johnnie's horse won and I was glad of it, for he seemed so eager, but I could not help wondering what sort of a man this proud little Indian jockey would make.

A YAKIMA SUN DANCE.

The Indians who live in the great State of Washington are not wild like the red men whom Columbus found when he discovered America, but have been taught to live as white men do, and to till the earth instead of living entirely by fishing and hunting.

Many of them still cling to their old ways, however, and even a wealthy Indian will keep his wagon and machines in his nice wooden house, and live in an old teepee with his family.

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The Yakima tribe have tried hard to stay wild, and not to do what the palefaces wished them to, and so there are about two hundred of them on this beautiful reservation who live down at one corner of the land on the banks of the Yakima river, and never allow white men to interfere with any of their ways. They will not accept any help from the government, and though they find it very hard to get enough to eat, they have never yet taken food or blankets from the agent, who would be very glad to help them. They have their feasts and dances just as their fathers did, and live in the old wild way, but they are not unfriendly to white people and will allow them to come and see some of their worship, though there are some dances that if a white man was discovered in he would be put to death at once.

I once went to a pom pom dance in the big teepee of Doctor Billy, the big medicine man of the tribe, and it was the strangest meeting I ever saw. The top of the teepee was open and the sunlight streamed in upon the ground floor, where three little fires were burning for they worship fire and were singing a hymn of praise to the great sun when we went in. Four men with plenty of paint on their faces

A YAKIMA SUN DANCE.

and feathers in their hair were beating the pom poms, or drums, with all their might,



"CULTUS PETER," A YAKIMA.

while all the men and women sat in rows on the floor, swaying back and forth, and singing the most unearthly music you ever heard. Part of the time they all stood up and sang in

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the same way, jumping up and down and beating their breasts all the time, pointing to the sun at the end of each verse.

There were some very little babies there and they were strapped on a board which the mother carries on her back by means of a strap over her forehead. When she wants to ride horseback she hangs her baby on the saddle, and off she goes over the prairie.

The teepee was covered with barks and skins and its walls were hung with mattings made by the Indians from the rushes and flags that grow on the banks of the river. It was thought to be a splendid house, and Doctor Billy's poorer friends were very glad to come and see him. They brought their whole families and camped there for days, having meetings day and night, and staying until everything he had to eat was gone.

AN INDIAN FOURTH OF JULY.

I think no little white boy or girl ever enjoyed a Fourth of July celebration more than the Indians on the Yakima reservation did last year. The Fourth is a very big day with these people, and they get ready for it for days beforehand.

The celebration was held in a beautiful oak grove where the agency is located, at Fort Simcoe, thirty-five miles from Yakima, the nearest town, and on the night before the Fourth there were one thousand Indians encamped in the grove where years ago were Uncle Sam's soldiers, sent out there to prevent the savages from murdering the few white people who then lived in the Northwest.

You know everybody wants to see the procession on Fourth of July? Well, I wish every one of you could have seen that procession!

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First came the Indian police, dressed as our policemen are and looking very dignified. Then came the judges, grave and important looking men, and then rode the greatest of all the Indians, White Swan, chief of the reservation, who has for years been the friend of the government and sits on his horse as proudly as though he were a king. He was dressed in soldier's clothes, with the Stars and Stripes across his breast, and in his hand he carried a great fan made of the wing of the wild white swan, from which he took his name when he was a wild Indian.

Then came the men on horseback, dressed as warriors, all in paint and skins and feathers, and all whooping like mad to show the way their fathers used to go to war. The women and girls came next, their faces daubed with every color, and dressed in all the gay finery they could get, and around and around the square they went until the air seemed full of redskins and we almost wondered if they would get excited enough to begin to fight in real earnest.

After the parade they had a war dance, and then a great big dinner in the grove, just like one of our own picnics, and after that there

THE PAINTED ROCKS.

were real Fourth of July speeches, and some of those Indians talked quite as well as many of the white men who made speeches that day.

The evening was given up to dancing and White Swan gave every dancer a present of bead work, and in the gray of the morning they began to ride away, all very happy over the birth of the nation that took their great land from them.

THE PAINTED ROCKS.

A LEGEND.

A great many years ago, so long that not even the oldest Indian can remember it, there lived a beautiful maiden, the daughter of old Anchie, chief of the Yakimas, and her father was so proud of her beauty and goodness that to him she was like the morning star that waits in the blue sky until the kingly sun is well on his journey, and then modestly hides her face. So he called her "Star of the Morning," and so tender was he of her that scarcely a brave in the tribe dared approach her to offer a gift of the most priceless ermine skin or

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the plumage from the shy and beautiful ptarmigen, which all the young men hunted eagerly, hoping to please the princess, for all the people loved her.

Still she loved none of the warriors, until one day young Strong Heart bowed before her with no offering but a tender flower, and when the princess saw him she paled and trembled just as the morning star pales before the sun and she went to her father's wigwam and knelt before him on a robe of bearskin and said: "Oh, my father, you have long wished that among the young men of our tribe might be found one worthy to take your place as chieftain of the people, but you have ever been kind and patient with your child when none of them could touch her heart. Now at last have I seen one who is above all others and before whose eyes my heart fluttered like the tender leaves on the aspen tree, and now if it please you, call Strong Heart and tell him his gift is lying on my breast."

Then the old chief was glad and called Strong Heart, and at once there was a great feast spread, for all the Yakimas loved Strong Heart and Morning Star, and so they were happily married.

THE PAINTED ROCKS.

But in the neighboring tribe of the Klickitats was a young chief who was very bitter



PETER BROWN—A KLIKITAT.

when he heard the story and he said to himself: "Morning Star would not so much as look at the gifts I brought her, though they were costly and beautiful. Let her beware!"

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And he incited his people to war against the Yakimas so that about a year after the marriage there was a great battle fought and the Klickitat chief carried the young Morning Star as a prisoner.

Then did Strong Heart, who was now the chief, vow to be avenged, and he gathered a great army of warriors and started in hot chase after the flying army. At last, on the brow of a rocky hill overhanging the raging Natchez river, he overtook the Klickitats and demanded that the chief give him his wife and child.

But his only answer was a shower of arrows, and so the two armies fought until but few Yakimas were left and the noble Strong Heart was almost alone with his enemy. Then the lovely Morning Star broke loose from her captors, and running to her husband she threw herself into his arms, crying:

"O, my chief, since you must die let me die with you, for my life is nothing if you leave me."

And while the cruel Klickitat chieftain smiled at the thought that he should soon put Strong Heart to death by torture and keep for his own the lovely princess, Strong Heart turned

THE PAINTED ROCKS.

and with one swift stride reached the edge of the rocky wall, and before the astonished warriors could stop him he had plunged with his wife in his arms into the surging waters of the Natchez, and so they perished together for the love of each other.

Then the Klickitats drew away, and after a time the cunning men of the Yakimas came and on the rocks above the river they painted the story of the battle and the deeds of Strong Heart, and to this day the pictures may be seen as plain and bright as though they were done yesterday.

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